

Message Text

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ACTION A-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 1429

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SO, US
SUBJECT: SIKES/SIAD MEETING - AUGUST 18

SUMMARY: IN CONVERSATION WITH CONGRESSMAN SIKES ON AUGUST 18, PRESIDENT SIAD STUCK WITH GENERALITIES AND DID NOT RPT NOT PEPEAT ALLEGATIONS OF 15,000 MAN CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA OR URGENCY OF SOMALI ARMS NEEDS. HE BITTERLY ATTACKED MENGISTU REGIME AND SAID ETHIOPIAN LEADER HAD BUT TWO ALTERNATIVES: EITHER GIVE COLONIZED PEOPLES IN ETHIOPIA THEIR SELF-DETERMINATION OR FACE MILITARY DEFEAT WHICH WOULD OBTAIN SAME RESULT. HE TURNED ASIDE CONGRESSMAN'S REQUEST FOR SHIP VISIT. HE DID NOT RPT NOT ATTACK SOVIET UNION DIRECTLY NOR REVEAL WHAT HIS NEXT MOVE MIGHT BE IN HIS DISPUTE WITH MOSCOW ABOUT LATTER'S ETHIOPIAN POLICY. END SUMMARY.

1. SIAD SAID AT ONSET THAT FONMIN ABDURAHMAN CONVERSATION WITH CONGRESSMAN SIKES EARLIER SAME EVENING HAD DESCRIBED CRITICAL SITUATION NOW FACING SOMALIA AND HE WOULD NOT RPT NOT GO OVER SAME GROUND. HE THUS REMOVED HIMSELF FROM ANY DIRECT IDENTIFICATION WITH HIS FONMIN'S PLEASE--MILITARY ASSISTANCE WITHIN 48 HOURS; 15,000 MAN CUBAN PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA, ETC. (SEPTEL) --AND CONFIDED HIMSELF TO GENERALITIES. HE LAUNCHED INTO LONG, RAMBLING MONOLOGUE ON SOMALIA FOREIGN POLICY AND HIS DESIRE FOR PEACE IN AREA.

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2. SIAD REVIEWED US-SOMALI RELATIONS AND SAID HE HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR CLOSER TIES WITH US FOLLOWING HIS WASHINGTON VISIT AND HIS TALKS WITH PRESENTENT FORD IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1974 BUT THAT SUBSEQUENT US ALLEGATIONS ABOUT SOVIET BASE IN SOMALIA HAD MADE THAT IMPOSSIBLE.

3. CONGRESSMAN SIKES TOLD SIAD THAT HE HAD BEEN IMPRESSED

BY WHAT HE HAD SEEN OF SOMALIA AND WAS ANXIOUS TO BE HELPFUL IN ESTABLISHING NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOMALIA AND US. HE WAS PREPARED TO CARRY HIS MESSAGE BACK TO HIS CONGRESSIONAL COLLEAGUES REGARDING SITUATION IN SOMALIA. HE SAID IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO CONGRESSMEN LIKE HIMSELF IF SIAD WOULD AGREE TO US SHIP VISITS TO SOMALI PORTS. THIS WAS SIMPLE FIRST STEP WHICH WOULD IMMEDIATELY BENEFIT THE SOMALI CAUSE IN WASHINGTON.

4. SIAD HEDGED HOWEVER AND TURNING TO AMBASSADOR LOUGHRAN SUGGESTED THAT AMBASSADOR MIGHT BE WILLING TO ANSWER CONGRESSMAN'S QUESTION ABOUT US SHIP VISITS.

5. AMBASSADOR LOUGHRAN SAID HE HAD PUT SAME QUESTION TO SIAD AND WAS STILL WAITING FOR HIS RESPONSE. SIAD SIDESTEPED DIRECT ANSWER AND THEN AFTER SOMEWHAT RAMBLING COLLOGUY EXPLAINED THAT QUOTE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE UNQUOTE NEEDED TO BE CLARIFIED BEFORE US SHIP VISITS WOULD SERVE USEFUL PURPOSE. LOOKING AGAIN AT HIS FOUR AMERICAN VISITORS HE SAID HE THOUGHT HE DETECTED IN THEIR FACES SOME CONFUSION ABOUT HIS ANSWER. (THE CONFUSION WAS AS GENUINE AS HIS INABILITY TO CLARIFY HIS RESPONSE.)

6. SIAD SPENT SOME TIME EXCORIATING MENGISTU REGIME IN ADDIS, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS WORST KIND OF COLONIALISM. OAU HAD IGNORED ABYSSINIAN COLONIALISM BECAUSE IT WAS BLACK CONFIDENTIAL

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COLONIALISM. HE SAW NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IAN SMITH AND MENGISTU. THERE WERE ONLY TWO SOLUTIONS TO ETHIOPIAN COLONIALISM: EITHER MENGISTU REGIME GAVE ITS COLONIZED PEOPLES RIGHT TO SELF DETERMINATION OR NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WOULD WIN IT BY FORCE OF ARMS. SIAD THEN ENUMERATED NATIONAL LIBERATIONS MOVEMENTS OPPOSED TO MENGISTU'S BLOODY RULE, INCLUDING WORKERS, STUDENTS, EDU, ETC. IT WAS APPARENT THAT HE BELIEVED --OR WANTED HIS VISITORS TO BELIEVE --THAT ANY COMPROMISE WITH MENGISTU REGIME WAS OUT OF QUESTION: MENGISTU MUST YIELD TO NATIONAL LIBERATION GROUPS EITHER POLITICALLY OR BY FORCE OF ARMS.

7. WHEN HE WAS LATER ASKED WHAT ROLE US MIGHT PLAY IN PUTTING AN END TO BLOODSHED IN OGADEN, SIAD SAID THAT WAS WAS AN INTERNAL ETHIOPIAN MATTER AND FOREIGNERS SHOULD STAY OUT. IF THERE WAS A ROLE FOR OUTSIDERS TO PLAY, THIS WAS MATTER FOR OAU AND NOT PT NOT NON-AFRICAN NATIONS.

8. REGARDING SOVIET PRESENCE IN HORN AND IN AFRICA, CONGRESSMAN SIKES SAID THAT RUSSIANS HAD MOVED INTO AFRICA IN STRENGTH AND WERE INTERESTED IN EXTENDING THEIR PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE. HE DID NOT THINK SIAD WISHED TO

ASSIST SOVIET EXPANSION IN THE REGION. IN ONE OF HIS FEW DIRECT REFERENCES TO SOVIET UNION DURING HIS CONVERSATION, SIAD SAID THAT IF SOVIET UNION SUCCEEDED IN CONSOLIDATING ITS POSITION WITH ETHIOPIA, SOVIET THREAT WOULD BE FELT IN SAUDI ARABIA AS WELL AS EUROPE.

9. SIAD DID NOT RPT REFER TO HIS REQUEST FOR US MILITARY ASSISTANCE OR MILITARY SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA. HE SAID NOTHING ABOUT CUBANS. HIS COMMENTS HAD NONE OF URGENCY F FONMIN'S APPEAR. AT ONE POINT IN CONVERSATION HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT US WOULD BENEFIT FROM MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA

WHEN HE SAIDQUOTE WE NEED YOU. WE MAY ALSO BE USEFUL TO YOU AT SOME FUTURE DATE UNQTE BUT THIS WAS AS CLOSE AS CONFIDENTIAL

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HE CAME TO IDENTIFYING ANY ADVANTAGES US MIGHT RECEIVE FROM HELPING HIS REGIME AT PRESENT TIME.

10. SIAD APPEARS TO US TO BE STANDING ABOVE HUE-AND-CRY BEING RAISED BY HIS SUBORDINATES AT THIS TIME, WHETHER AT FOREIGN MINISTRY OR IN FOREIGN CAPITALS. EXCEPT FOR ATTACKS AGAINST MENGISTU AND HIS LINE THAT ETHIOPIA MUST YIELD TO NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS (SIC) IN OGADEN AND THAT FOREIGNERS MUST STAY OUT OF ETHIOPIAN FIGHT, HE IS KEEPING HIS CARDS VERY CLOSE TO HIS CHEST.

11. CONGRESSMAN SIKES WAS ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR, COUNSELOR AND MAJOR LONNY ALEXANDER. LOUGHRAN

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